



# JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

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Vol. XVI, No. 4

December 1956

## POPE'S LETTERS

O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay! This is the moment we have long been waiting for -- the day when we can send hearty congratulations to George Sherburn on the publication of The Correspondence of Alexander Pope (5 vols. Clarendon Press). For some twenty years he has been working at the project, and though we may lament the fact that problems of the text of the letters has kept him from writing The Later Career, the present edition is worth all the labor and sacrifice involved. There is no question that this is one of the great scholarly works in our period, to be enthusiastically welcomed with loud hurrahs.

It would be ungracious to lament too vocally the fact that modern printing costs, and the desire to hold the main texts to four volumes, forced a more crowded page than Clarendon has normally produced in the past. And the same considerations were undoubtedly responsible for the omission of full critical apparatus and extensive annotation. Very properly Sherburn has concentrated on presenting accurate versions of the letters, and for this we should be eternally grateful. At last we have dependable transcripts of most of Pope's letters. For only a small percent do we now have to depend on early suspected printings.

In addition to settling the vexing matter of the texts, Sherburn has been able to give us over a third more letters than did Elwin and Courthope. Included are a number of valuable new correspondences -- to Ralph Allen, to the Earl and Countess of Burlington, to William Warburton and Hugh Bethel -- and there are many additions to well known exchanges with other friends. The whole series of some 2100 letters to and from Pope is now arranged in one chronological sequence, so that we can follow Pope's

friendships and his literary career for almost forty years, in one long revealing narrative.

There is no need to recapitulate all the difficulties which Sherburn had to surmount: the bibliographical mysteries connected with the early editions; the long and often exasperating search for the original manuscripts (some have still been withheld from him); the perplexing problems of undated letters which had to be fitted into the chronological series; and the usual troubles with identifications, allusions, vague references. Then there was the additional problem of devising a simple and clear means of indicating without an elaborate apparatus the various revisions and fabrications made for the early printed versions. Through all these entangling coils Sherburn has triumphantly made his way, with little of the struggle showing on the surface. Indeed, many casual readers may never even suspect how difficult it all was.

It seems to us that his solution of the problem of the re-written letters is admirable. By the use of half brackets and other easily recognized symbols we are able almost at a glance to see which letters were mangled and how, which ones still depend on printed sources, which are completely new, and which are now first printed accurately from reliable sources. Throughout, the mechanical details are efficient and compact. The general annotation may not be so full as many scholars would like, but few today can afford the luxury of footnoting in the manner of G.B. Hill, even if that were wholly desirable.

Elsewhere we have discussed the merits of Pope's letters. It must be admitted that they are not consciously witty or gossipy in the manner of Horace Walpole; they are not endearing as are those of William Cowper. They contain little malice or biting irony. Yet undeniably they show, and were meant to show, the best side of Pope's character. As Sherburn points out, Pope "made almost a cult of friendship." He writes "as an indefatigably kind person." And this attitude appears in almost all of his letters, not merely in those designed for publication. Call it a pose if you will. It was at least a consistent one which he showed to his most intimate friends, and which they accepted as genuine.

For any understanding of Pope's complex personality, and for evidence about the relationships of the Scriblerus group, Sherburn's superb edition now assumes first importance.



### LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

Every year, as your editor has lectured on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, he has been forced to confess his inability to explain the reasons behind that lady's departure from England in 1739. And what made the matter worse was the fact that Bob Halsband knew the answer, but wouldn't tell. Evidently the enigma made an indelible impression on students, since again and again those from former years would stop by to ask "Have you found out about Lady Mary?" Indeed, this one problem seemed to be the one thing they remembered vividly from the course. Now this means of obtaining attention has been taken away. With the appearance of Halsband's admirable Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu the mystery is finally cleared up. What the undergraduates will now have to remember remains to be seen.

The new biography represents years of active research, for Halsband has followed the trail of surviving manuscripts from California to Constantinople. He has gained access to scores of family archives in English country houses. Rarely has so much new evidence been discovered about a well known figure. And he uses the evidence with remarkable skill. Speaking as one who understands the manifold difficulties involved, your editor cannot praise too highly the way Halsband has fitted the many disparate elements into a smooth-running account.

At the start Halsband makes clear that he has purposely avoided any attempt at psychological interpretation, and he has not tried to fill in a colorful background. He refuses to guess about motives or imagine what might have happened. Rigorously he sticks to ascertainable facts, and leaves the interpretations to others. He thus provides what has long been needed, a clear presentation of all the available evidence, adeptly assembled for all kinds of readers.

Halsband's account of the fantastic rivalry of Lady Mary and Lord Hervey for the love of the colorful Count Francesco Algarotti, which led to the lady's plan to meet the younger man in Italy, is brilliantly put together. And there is the strange affair of the dominating Count Palazzi, who for years apparently held her almost in bondage -- an episode in her later life which for most of us comes as a complete surprise. To be sure, there are still mysteries. No one has explained satisfactorily -- at least not

so far -- the origin of the quarrel with Pope. Without more evidence, it is inevitable that the supporters of Lady Mary will think the worst of her opponent, and Popeans will return the suspicion. Halsband makes no attempt to defend Lady Mary, but it is easy to see that he thinks the dreadful descriptions by Pope, and later by Horace Walpole, were dubious, to say the least. And there, barring further discoveries, the matter must rest.

Unfortunately space does not permit further discussion of Halsband's excellent biography. One thing is certain; this beautiful volume will remain the standard life of Lady Mary, at least for our time.

### UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA SWIFT EXHIBITION

To celebrate the acquisition by the University of Pennsylvania of the extensive Teerink collection of the works of Jonathan Swift, the Friends of the Library and the Department of English arranged a special exhibition and lecture on 26 January. A large audience was on hand to hear an admirable address by Ronald Crane, "Swift and the Perfectionists," in which he analyzed the recent trends in critical interpretation of the fourth voyage of Gulliver.

In an amusing introduction Albert C. Baugh reminisced about the days, almost a half century earlier, when he had been in Crane's freshman English course at Pennsylvania, even divulging the important information for future chroniclers of the history of American scholarship that it was through this association that he had been introduced to the use of "4by6" cards. Later in the afternoon the guests were entertained by the Rosenbach Foundation in Delancey Place. For all this very pleasant afternoon we owe a great debt to A.H. Scouten, who was largely responsible for securing the collection and arranging the exhibition. Many congratulations! Everyone who works on Swift must now make Philadelphia one of his chief stopping points.

### QUERIES

Tom Copeland (Univ. of Chicago) sends on a few questions which he hopes some JNL reader may be able to answer. Here they are:

(1) In a youthful letter, 28 May 1747, Burke quotes two lines he says are from a "vile prologue":



"But if you damn, be it discreetly done:  
Flatter us here, and damn us when you're gone."

Does anyone recognize the lines? As Copeland adds, they do sound faintly familiar, and are not too vile, but he has somehow failed to place them.

(2) In some verses of his dated "November 1750," but possibly later, Burke moralizes on a "grave Divine Who not to Damn his Book, renounc'd his See." Is there a likely candidate for the reference in the late 1740s or early 1750s? Any hints will be greatly appreciated.

Paul Fussell, Jr. (Rutgers) comments on what seems to him a pressing area for research in the eighteenth century -- the relationship between British Freemasonry and the Augustan intellectual and religious climate. As he points out, the fundamental "ideas" of Freemasonry -- self-restraint and control, the hierarchical ethical paradigm, the idea of universal brotherhood, the conviction that religious and political argument is fruitless, and the general sense of the dignity of the Citizen of the World -- are so intimately connected with the prevailing emphases in Augustan literature that a number of questions suggest themselves. "To what extent was Augustan literature influenced, overtly or covertly, by the 'intellectual' tendencies of Freemasonry? To what extent, on the other hand, is Freemasonry simply a unique production of the Augustan climate of values and ideas? How is Freemasonry implicated with the sentimentalist current? To what extent is its symbolism Newtonian? How seriously did its eighteenth-century adherents take it?"

Fussell adds that he is not himself a Mason, but he would like to see more work done in this field. We happen to know of some research being done on Masonry, particularly in drama, but what about any other projects bearing on this topic? Let us have your comments, or answers to Fussell's questions.

Arthur Sherbo (Michigan State) wants to know if any of our readers can tell him something about Joseph Lewis, a mid-eighteenth-century poet (or any Joseph Lewis of the time), or about J. Dowse, bookseller, of the same period. Plomer gives only a meagre sentence on the latter.

### MISCELLANEOUS NEWS ITEMS

We apologize for the lateness of this issue, but wished to see the new edition of Pope's letters before going to press. Because we still promise at least four issues a year, this number is dated December 1956. The habit of getting behind, however, is certainly creeping up on us.

Restoration and eighteenth-century scholarship suffered an irreparable loss in the sudden death through a heart attack on 11 January of Edward N. Hooker of U.C.L.A. He was only 54 years old. One of the co-founders of ELH and the Augustan Reprint Society, he was a guiding spirit in the new California edition of the works of Dryden. His edition of Dennis is an outstanding performance. His like as a scholar and as a delightful companion will not be seen soon again.

We lament also the untimely passing of Charles Bennett, who for many years has been working on the Yale Walpole. He had been seriously ill for the last two years. Gentle and retiring, with a keen mind and enormous knowledge of the eighteenth century, he was a remarkable editor, whether of Boswell's journals or of the letters of the Master of Strawberry Hill.

We have heard also of the death in Laurel, Mississippi of W.B.C. Watkins, author of numerous works relating to our period. He had been in bad health for some time.

Jim Osborn will address the Bibliographical Society in London on 19 February on the topic "Narcissus Luttrell."

Herbert Davis, who holds the Readership in Textual Criticism at Oxford, now has the title of Professor. This term he is teaching at the University of Toronto.

Bob Halsband is on leave of absence from Hunter College, and this year is Research Associate in the English Department of Columbia University.

Claude Collier Abbott of the University of Durham is at Yale University working on Boswell's letters.



John C. Weston, Jr. (Univ. of Virginia) writes that he has completed a study of "Edmund Burke as Historian," and is continuing with other projects devoted to Burke.

Plans are going forward for the William Blake Bicentenary Celebrations. V. de S. Pinto is Chairman of an impressive sponsoring committee, and F. Heming Vaughan (17 Park Ave., Mansfield, Notts., England) is Hon. Secretary.

The Library of the State University of Iowa has received an extensive collection dealing with the Ireland Shakespeare forgeries. The donor is J. Hubert Scott.

In late November the Columbia Theatre Associates gave a fascinating production of The Dream, arranged by John Reich and Nicholas Goldschmidt from Shakespeare's Midsummer-Night's Dream, with music and masque scenes from Purcell's Fairy Queen. The combination was a great success, as all who attended will bear witness.

As most of you know, we are generally of an equable disposition, but one thing really makes our gorge rise; and that is the ascription of the music of the Beggar's Opera to Pepusch. Bronson and others have shown conclusively that it was Gay himself who chose the music, and all that Pepusch did was to orchestrate the tunes and put together an overture. Yet in a listing of a new recording of the opera in the Saturday Review Pepusch is given as the author in the heading and Gay is not even listed. Imagine what we would think if the arranger of Richard Rodgers' melodies were given credit for Oklahoma or South Pacific. Yet this bit of misinformation is firmly imbedded in musical lore. How about a campaign to stamp it out? Whenever you meet a music critic or musicologist, suggest that he look up the facts.

Work is steadily going forward on An Index of British Periodicals and Newspapers in the Eighteenth Century, and a preliminary report on the year 1700 has been issued by Powell Stewart and W.O.S. Sutherland, Jr. of the Univ. of Texas. Aiding also in the project are R.D. Spector, W.F. Belcher, and R.F. Baine. If you are interested in what is going on write to one of these men.

On 24 January the Folger Library in Washington scheduled a lecture by the Earl of Crawford and Belcarres on "Country Life in the Eighteenth Century."

## RYMER'S CRITICISM

One of the most overworked of all the opening gambits of the reviewer is the insistence that this or that new work has long been eagerly awaited. As readers of JNL will recognize, we use it ourselves a good deal. Yet this is certainly true of Curt Zimansky's (Iowa) edition of The Critical Works of Thomas Rymer (Yale Univ. Press). Though perhaps not by general readers, it has been looked forward to by all serious students of the Restoration, as a much needed work.

For too long Rymer has been known merely through Macaulay's stinging characterization of him as the worst critic that ever lived, and by the hushed horror attending certain quotations taken bodily out of their context. That Rymer called Othello "a Bloody Farce, without salt or savour" is incontestable, but the background of his judgment is usually not understood. And who are we in the twentieth century to take a "holier than thou" attitude? The late seventeenth century was not the only time when the dramatic qualities of Shakespeare's masterpieces have been questioned. Remember that the drama critic on one of our most literate magazines today has called King Lear "one of the most muddled and preposterous melodramas ever conceived by the human mind." And a well known reviewer on a New York daily paper wrote of As You Like It as a "preposterous charade," and another called Antony and Cleopatra "a monumental bore." Moreover, for all our scholarly concern about matters of text, and our classroom veneration, Shakespeare on Broadway and in the movies is being cut and refurbished with almost the freedom of the Restoration.

But these comments are intended not as a defense of the brutal, common sense approach to a classic, but as a plea for a more careful reading of Rymer in his entirety. In all there is not much, only five pieces, occupying 175 pages in the present edition. For one thing, Rymer is not dull. His was a powerful mind, and his style pungent and clear. In his own frame of reference he is a hard man to argue with, and he deserves a fair hearing even by those who deny the relevance of his postulates. Zimansky has now provided an excellent text, with valuable notes and commentary. The old excuse of the unavailability of Rymer's published works can be used no longer.



## CHURCHILL'S POEMS

The latest in the series of standard editions of eighteenth-century poets produced by the Clarendon Press is The Poetical Works of Charles Churchill. Edited by Douglas Grant (Toronto), it is a single handsomely-printed volume of almost 600 pages. We thus now have easily available sound texts of all of Churchill's satires, with sufficient annotation to render clear for modern readers the individuals attacked, the covert allusions, and the long forgotten gossip of the time.

There are two ways of editing Churchill's poems: one, to think of him as a vital poet in the Augustan tradition, whose lines can be read with sheer pleasure in their vigorous thrusts and satiric art; the other, to consider him a second-rate poet, but important historically for what he tells us about contemporary life and letters. Obviously Grant accepts the former view, since he relegates notes and apparatus to the back of the volume. He expects us to read the works as poems, not as documents, and he does not wish the pages cluttered with pedantic annotation. Yet we wonder how many modern readers actually do read Churchill purely for aesthetic reasons. The greater number, we suspect, are more interested in the content of the poems, and these readers will resent the necessity of keeping a finger always inserted at another place for the required explication. Perhaps we are wrong. At least Grant has had the courage of his convictions and has given us an attractive reading version.

In the notes Grant has assembled a mass of valuable background material -- from contemporary newspapers, magazines, rare pamphlets, and other sources. All this is clearly and economically presented. Yet some of us will wish that the preliminaries had not been quite so astringent, and that Grant had been a little more generous with information. For example, in the preliminary notes to the poems there is generally a reference to notices in the Monthly Review, but no indication of the reviewers' names. A cross reference to the special biographical entry for John Langhorne, where his authorship of many of the reviews is stated, would have helped immensely and would not have taken up much space.

But these are minor quibbles, and we welcome the volume heartily as one more indispensable tool generously provided by the Clarendon Press for all eighteenth-century specialists.

### MORE NEW BOOKS

An interesting little book which has just reached us is Charles Parkin's The Moral Basis of Burke's Political Thought (Cambridge University Press). Parkin discusses first Burke's interpretation of the Social Contract theory; then goes on to analyze the natural relation of society and government. Later chapters are titled "The Attempt to Realize Abstract Natural Rights," "Burke's Criticism of the Abstract Idealism of the French Revolution," "Burke's Conception of the Moral Order," and "The Religious Basis of Burke's Moral Belief."

We are delighted, as no doubt you will be also, to see that the Cornell University Press, in its series of Great Seal Books, has issued a paper-back collection of Marjorie Nicolson's well known essays in the history of ideas. Entitled Science and Imagination, the volume contains a number of short pieces which have become classics of their kind -- her discussions of the impact of the microscope and telescope, and her analysis of the satire on science in the third book of Gulliver. Now we can send our students to these essays with no apologies for the difficulty of finding them in the library.

The Pocket Library has issued a 35¢ edition of the Vicar of Wakefield, with an Introduction by Ernest Brennecke. What with Ted Hilles's recent volumes, the Vicar is still being much reprinted.

W.B. Ewald Jr.'s Newsmen of Queen Anne has been issued in this country by Houghton Mifflin with the title Rogues, Royalty, and Reporters.

The two latest issues of the Augustan Reprint Society are Two Funeral Sermons (1635), with an Introduction by Frank L. Huntley; and Elizabeth Elstob's An Apology for the Study of Northern Antiquities (1715), with an Introduction by Charles Peake.

As a Christmas greeting, R.W. Ketton-Cremer has sent out an entertaining little pamphlet of twenty pages entitled The Phantom Duel, in which he recounts a celebrated quarrel and reputed duel in Norfolk in 1759. The story will appear in his new book, Norfolk Assembly, to be published later this year.



A few other books to be mentioned are: John Brooke, The Chatham Administration, 1766-1768 (Macmillan); J.H. Plumb, The First Four Georges (Batsford); Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, Vol. 12.

### A NEW RICHARDSON CORRESPONDENCE

Bill Sale (Cornell) has presented to the Cornell University Library manuscripts of a hitherto unpublished correspondence of Samuel Richardson, which he has recently acquired. From Ed. Ruhe comes a description of the contents:

"There is a kind of table-of-contents to the collection in Richardson's hand, and Richardson also used one of the letters to tally up expenses on a publishing venture. The correspondents are Lady Barbara Montague (and her amanuensis Mrs. Scott), and Samuel Richardson (and his stand-in on four occasions, William Richardson). The dates are 1753 (one letter) and 1758-60. The five letters of Samuel Richardson are all copies in the hand of his daughter. The main topics are two projects that Lady Barbara was sponsoring: one, a sort of educational game involving picture cards; the other a 'novel' called The Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen-House, written by an anonymous friend of Lady Barbara's described as a gentlewoman in distress. A letter from Richardson calling the anonymous author to task for her excesses in compiling errata has some moderately valuable and quite detailed statements on spelling, hyphenating, and other policies followed by Richardson's printers. Another contains some probably foolish remarks on the excellence of the Penitents, which Lady Barbara herself apparently considered a fairly dreary, moralistic, and misleadingly titled book."

### JOHNSON NOTES

We see that T.S. Eliot has included an address, never before printed, on "Samuel Johnson as Poet and Critic" in a new collection of essays entitled On Poetry and Poets. So far, we have not yet seen the book.

Stjepan Kresic writes from Zagreb, Yugoslavia, that he hopes within a few months to complete an abridged translation of Boswell's Life of Johnson into the Serbo-Croat language. It will be published by Kultura Publishing Co. in Zagreb, and will contain some

fifty illustrations, as well as a fifty-page Introduction by Kresic.

We would naturally be delighted to see any book on Johnson win a prize -- and particularly Walter Jackson Bate's The Achievement of Samuel Johnson (O.U.P.), which was awarded the Christian Gauss Phi Beta Kappa award of \$1,000, given to the best book of literary scholarship and criticism published by a university press. Books produced by trade publishers were not eligible. The award was made at a dinner late in November. Many congratulations to all concerned!

Arthur Sherbo points out that despite recent thorough discussions of Johnson's part in writing the parliamentary debates, D.W. Jefferson in his recent Pelican Book of English Prose includes as Chesterfield's excerpts from one of the speeches written by Johnson. We forebear further comment, though there are amusing overtones.

Henry Pettit is disturbed by Louis Milic's comments on Johnson on Gray on Dryden, and adds; "Johnson's concern is not, I believe, as Mr. Milic implies, with the allusion implicit in Gray's 'Car' but with the propriety of the image. Johnson is weary of cliché and finds 'nothing in it peculiar.' The definitions of 'car' and 'coursers,' or rather the examples, quoted in Johnson's Dictionary, show what Gray was up to. He must have intended an appropriate peculiarity by way of adopting images used by the poet he is describing, a kind of accolade which T.S. Eliot has made us perfectly familiar with today, but which Johnson may have distrusted as a form of pedantic affectation."

In our description of the portrait of Johnson's wife "Tetty" we may inadvertently have given a wrong impression. The exact wording on the back of the nineteenth-century frame is "Lucy Porter wife of Saml. Johnson, L.L.D." Mary Hyde suggests that the space between "Porter" and "wife" would indicate that the two parts are not necessarily connected, that the first part indicates ownership of the portrait and the second part the subject. The picture was owned by Lucy, but was of her mother. This interpretation is attractive, but we still think it more likely that the whole ascription is merely a later faulty note added by someone whose memory for names played him false, and who thought "Tetty's" name was Lucy. But the evidence as to the authenticity of the portrait itself is so strong that this minor point is not too important.